



THE ROYAL
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SCOTLAND



ANNUAL REVIEW 2017



BRINGING CONSERVATION TO LIFE



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OUR MISSION:
**To connect people
with nature
and safeguard
threatened species**

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT



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In my first year as President, I have come to realise what matters at RZSS.

Naturally, we care deeply about animals – those at Edinburgh Zoo and our Highland Wildlife Park, as well as species in the wild both here in Scotland and around the world whose very survival often depends on conservation and research. We are very much pioneers in conservation science and continue to enjoy great success with our breeding programmes, from high profile arrivals such as our polar bear cub to more humble but no less critical species such as the Socorro dove.

People are also at the heart of RZSS and our staff, ably led by our chief executive Barbara Smith, show dedication, innovation and a commitment to sustainability and conservation which impress me every time I visit. The affinity between our staff and the animals in our care is also striking, whether it is a rhino greeting their keeper or stick insects being shown to a group of children – including big kids like me!

You – our members – matter too and your support and passion are greatly appreciated. This was very much apparent at a recent consultation we held to consider opportunities to further improve disabled access at our two sites.

Above all, what matters is our future. Whilst we have a long and proud history, the development of a refreshed vision for RZSS and our new five-year strategy *From Empathy to Action* will determine the shape that future takes. The next step is to turn our strategy into well-developed plans for Edinburgh Zoo and Highland Wildlife Park, our education programmes and our conservation activities.

We all have a part to play in the future of RZSS. For RZSS is a family – our staff, members, volunteers and supporters all working together. I look forward to seeing many of you at our AGM in May and at other events over the coming year.

“We all have a part to play in the future of RZSS. For RZSS is a family – our staff, members and supporters all working together.”

Ian Marchant, President

1. Ian Marchant, President.
2. A young visitor to Edinburgh Zoo.
3. Socorro Dove.



One of three swamp wallaby joeys born at Edinburgh Zoo in September 2017.



Hamish was born at Highland Wildlife Park in December 2017 – the first polar bear cub birth in the UK for a quarter of a century.

If there was one moment in 2017 which encapsulated all that is special about RZSS and what we can achieve together, then it was the arrival just before Christmas of the first polar bear to be born in the UK for 25 years.

News that our female polar bear Victoria had given birth at our Highland Wildlife Park was hugely exciting and testament to the knowledge and skills of our staff, who have developed a world-leading polar bear management programme.

Our excitement and joy were soon mixed with hope and anticipation that Victoria would emerge from her den accompanied by a healthy cub, our only certainty being that several nervous months lay ahead, such are the perils of a polar bear cub's earliest days both in the wild and in human care.

March brought cause for celebration, as our new arrival took their first few tentative steps into the outside world, initial hesitancy soon giving way to boundless energy and curiosity unique to one so young.

The relief which followed was overtaken by a sense of achievement and common purpose – for our cub's birth is the result of many years of research, planning, expertise and, perhaps above all, an inherent understanding of our mission: to connect people with nature and safeguard threatened species.

Sadly, climate change and human pressures remain grave threats to the wild polar bear population. It is therefore essential that we have a robust captive population, which may be needed at some point this century to augment numbers in the wild.

But we cannot achieve this alone – not for polar bears and not for any species in need of protection – which is why the partnership working evident throughout this Annual Review is so important.

“We can look back with pride and ahead with optimism, knowing there is even more we can accomplish together.”

Education is also vital, both here at home, where we lead the way with our learning and development activities, and across the globe. We must continue to engage young people in particular with the wonders of nature, for they will become its future guardians.

Our role is to help ensure that future and we are encouraged by the continued

progress of our new five-year strategy *From Empathy to Action*, which maps our vision for RZSS based on our shared aims and values.

There was much for us to be proud of in 2017, with highlights including our many conservation and breeding successes, BIAZA awards for both the reintroduction of Partula snails to French Polynesia and our Tiger Tracks enclosure at Edinburgh Zoo, Highland Wildlife Park being named Best Day Out in Scotland and our Wild about Scotland outreach programme reaching its 500th school.

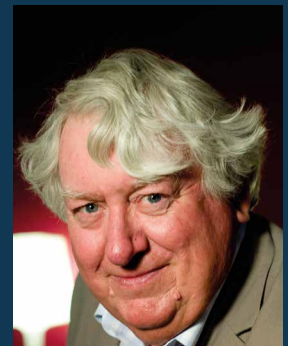
Edinburgh Zoo also received a gold Green Tourism award, again demonstrating our commitment to sustainability, and hosted our spectacular Giant Lanterns of China event, which enchanted more than 82,000 visitors between December and February.

These achievements are only possible thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers and incredible support from our members, visitors, funders and partners. Thank you to you all. We can look back with pride and ahead with optimism, knowing there is even more we can accomplish together.



Barbara Smith

Barbara Smith, Chief Executive



Jeremy A. Peat

Jeremy A. Peat, Chairman



Our animals

Provide exemplary animal care within an engaging, diverse and mission-focused collection: with our aim being for over 50% of the animals in our care to be vulnerable or above on the IUCN Red List of threatened species.



Our people

Realise the aspirations of our staff, volunteers and other stakeholders as part of one RZSS team: with RZSS developing a reputation as an employer of choice amongst the wider conservation community.



Conservation

Apply our collective expertise to species restoration both in Scotland and around the world: with conservation at the heart of everything we do.



Engagement

Move people from empathy to action through innovative conservation, education and memorable experiences: fostering a deep and lasting connection with the natural world.



Research

Enable evidence-based conservation activity through research and partnerships: underpinning our living collection, education, veterinary and conservation work.

In 2017 we developed our new five-year strategy *From Empathy to Action* and six key strategic themes to help us achieve our mission to connect people with nature and safeguard threatened species.



Sustainable growth

Grow a sustainable and diverse business, built from two world class visitor attractions: in an increasingly competitive funding environment.

In 2017 we:

OUR IMPACT



Reached over **100 million** people through our communications

Welcomed more than

682,000

visitors to Edinburgh Zoo and Highland Wildlife Park

Cared for

82

under threat species.*

Of these species:

- 30 are vulnerable
- 25 are endangered
- 14 are critically endangered
- 4 are extinct in the wild
- 9 are under threat in Scotland

*Please view our website for our complete 2017 inventory

supported international conservation projects around the world, investing over **£1.9 million**



Engaged with over

50,000

people through our discovery and learning programmes

Diverted **65 tonnes** of waste from landfill at Edinburgh Zoo – the weight of **4,355** king penguins!



OUR PEOPLE



As part of our new five-year strategy *From Empathy to Action*, we have continued to develop what it means to be part of RZSS by identifying and defining our values.

We aim to be recognised as an organisation which is ethical and sustainable, innovative, evidence-based and ambitious. In dealing with others, our actions will be collaborative and respectful.

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The knowledge and expertise of our staff are highly regarded and we are proud of the role we play across an incredibly broad range of areas.

Promoting and embracing these values will help us achieve our key strategic goals and our mission to connect people with nature and safeguard threatened species.

Realising our aspirations

Our focus is on realising the aspirations of our talented, passionate and dedicated staff and volunteers – working together and alongside all of our stakeholders to deliver our strategy as one focused and supportive RZSS team.

Central to this in 2017 was the development of meaningful departmental objectives linked directly to key strategic goals, ensuring each member of staff can see how they are helping RZSS achieve our shared aims and objectives.

This work has been supported by our new online performance management system, PABLO, which enables objectives, values-led behaviours and learning and development needs to be discussed and agreed for the coming year.

Recognising our expertise

RZSS and our staff help support the conservation efforts of other zoos, organisations and charities across the world, with our partnerships and many conservation successes highlighted throughout this annual review.

The knowledge and expertise of our staff are highly regarded and we are proud of the role we play across an incredibly broad range of areas.

In 2017 our staff held key positions as members of IUCN specialist groups and as co-chair to the EAZA felid taxon advisory group. Multiple international and European breeding programmes are also co-ordinated by RZSS staff, ranging from Pallas's cats, takin, red fronted macaw, gentoo and king penguins, to several primate species such as L'hoest's monkey, squirrel monkey and Diana monkey.

Other activities relating to global species management and support include assisting with the development of a captive breeding programme and husbandry protocols for the saiga antelope and the long term planning of a breeding and reintroduction project for our native felid the Scottish wildcat.

RZSS staff visited Laos in 2017 as our partnership with Free the Bears continued, while our veterinary team worked with the RSPB and the Moredun Institute to help preserve the endangered Gough Island moorhen and bunting, resulting in two key publications describing their physiology.

Our WildGenes staff co-authored papers on the reticulated python, the African forest elephant and the Himalayan wolf, with the team also being awarded a competitive grant by DEFRA to help combat the illegal ivory trade in association with Flora and Fauna International FFI and the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

We were delighted when our contribution to the protection of amphibians in Cameroon was recognised by the BIAZA conservation award, while British Herpetological Society funding for a proposed project to safeguard the natterjack toad on the Solway coast again demonstrated the impact of our activities at home and abroad.

Our experts also taught ethics and welfare, hosted the Scottish animal training focus group and gave a wide variety of talks throughout the year.

1. Visitors to Edinburgh Zoo.
2. A volunteer meeting a family at Edinburgh Zoo.
3. Our presentations team give a demonstration.

Innovative:

seeking new, different and more effective ways to make a positive difference



Ethical and sustainable:

acting with integrity, honesty and reliability, in an environment where the health and safety of our staff, visitors and animals is paramount



Collaborative:

working together with a common purpose, sharing responsibility and accountability



Ambitious:



Evidence-based:

using science and best practice to inform, guide and justify our choices, actions and decisions



aspiring to continuously improve ourselves and RZSS



Respectful:

contributing to a sense of support, belonging and respect that treats and includes everyone equally without restriction or discrimination



One of three Scottish wildcats born at our Highland Wildlife Park in April 2017.



Empathy to Action

Conservation is at the heart of what we do and – as part of our new five-year strategy *From Empathy to Action* – we aim to become a world leader.

Our conservation and research teams are active and engaged in exciting, cutting-edge projects both here in Scotland and in more than 20 countries across the globe.

The success we are achieving – demonstrated by the reintroduction of beavers in Scotland, the breeding of pond mud snails and on-going efforts to safeguard the Scottish wildcat – is underpinned by evidence-based research, with our WildGenes laboratory based at Edinburgh Zoo leading the way in translating genetic data into conservation recommendations.

Conservation and the restoration of threatened species cannot be achieved alone. We would like to thank all of our many Scottish and international partners and look forward to continued collaboration and achieving further progress in the years ahead.

Beaver reintroduction

Last year we reported that the Scottish Government had announced that beavers would be given protected status in Scotland.

We built on this success throughout 2017, working alongside the Scottish Wildlife Trust to establish the Scottish Beavers initiative to reinforce the wild beaver population at Knapdale Forest in Argyll, supported by Scottish Natural Heritage and hosted on the National Forest Estate.



Over three years we hope to release up to 28 beavers in the area to increase the diversity and improve the health and resilience of the original population, introduced through the Scottish Beaver Trial in 2009.

Pond mud snails

Our WildGenes staff and our conservation programme manager teamed-up with Buglife in 2017 to survey the increasingly rare pond mud snail, a native species which was historically widespread across the UK. Sadly, the snails now only inhabit a handful of known sites within Scotland.

To help prevent the loss of this valuable species, we created the first pond mud snail breeding programme at Edinburgh Zoo, which complements our wider native invertebrate conservation work.

Analysis of the genetic data is vital and will be used to inform future reintroductions and the reinforcement of the remaining wild pond mud snail population.

We are also investigating the use of environmental DNA, known as eDNA, to assess the presence – or absence – of pond mud snails. This pioneering conservation technique involves examining the genetic material left behind by organisms in the environments they pass through or live in.



Scottish Wildcat Action

We are continuing to work alongside our Scottish Wildcat Action partners – more than 20 conservation, scientific and land management organisations, supported by the Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund – to give the 'Highland Tiger' a fighting chance of survival.

Hybridisation with domestic and feral cats and habitat loss remain serious threats, with as few as 115 Scottish wildcats estimated to remain in the wild.

The birth of three Scottish wildcat kittens at our Highland Wildlife Park in April 2017 was therefore very exciting, taking the number to be born and reared at the park to 20 in just four years.

In collaboration with the Scottish wildcat studbook, held by the RZSS, future breeding decisions will be informed by ground-breaking work by our WildGenes laboratory following the development of a molecular studbook for the species. This work is supported by our veterinary and population management teams, with the aim of creating a more resilient and genetically diverse Scottish wildcat population.

1. October saw the first beavers of the year released as part of the Knapdale reinforcement project.
2. The pond mud snail is found in only seven known locations. The work we are undertaking will increase their distribution.
3. Our WildGenes laboratory produces genetic data to support practical conservation management decisions in Scotland and abroad.

CONSERVATION BEYOND SCOTLAND



We are incredibly proud of our international conservation work and success, with our teams representing RZSS with distinction and making a vital difference in safeguarding threatened species across the world.

Partula snail reintroduction

We were delighted when our work to reintroduce the critically-endangered Partula snail to Tahiti was recognised with a silver BIAZA award in 2017.

This group of tree snails is among the most threatened species in the world, having been decimated in the 1970s when the rosy wolf snail was introduced from Florida with the intention of controlling the non-native giant African land snail. Instead, the rapacious predators devoured the tiny native snails. We have been involved in the conservation of the snails since 1984 and were given one variety's last individual in 2010, which our team at Edinburgh Zoo has since bred back to a safe level of several hundred.

Over the last two years we have bred and reintroduced more than 1,300 Partula snails to their native territory, working alongside other zoos and collections. The evidence to date is the snails are thriving, making this team effort another wonderful conservation success story.

Pallas's cat research

We continue to play a key role in global Pallas's cat conservation and research following the development of the Pallas's cat International Conservation Alliance (PICA), a partnership project between RZSS, Nordens Ark (Sweden) and the Snow Leopard Trust.



This elusive species, listed as near threatened by the IUCN red list, suffers from a lack of detailed baseline knowledge, which is critical if conservation action can be delivered effectively.

With funding provided by Fondation Segré and supporting global zoological collections, PICA is able to directly support field research across numerous range countries whilst developing long term conservation plans for the species.

Budongo Conservation Field Station

RZSS has core-funded the Budongo Conservation Field Station in the Ugandan rainforest since 2005.

Combining cutting-edge research with practical action on the ground to study and protect a community of nearly 700 wild chimpanzees, the aim is to establish the Budongo Forest Reserve as a model for tropical rainforest management.

Overseen by a predominantly Ugandan team, the project studies chimp ecology, tropical forest birds and wider land use changes, working closely with local communities to reduce the impact of deforestation and snares to the area's chimpanzees.

Our chief executive Barbara Smith visited Budongo in October 2017 to witness the work first-hand and establish how our partnership can continue to develop.



Giant armadillo conservation

The award-winning Giant Armadillo Conservation Project, also core-funded by RZSS, established the first long-term ecological study of the species in the Pantanal wetland of South America.

This fascinating work was the focus of the BBC television documentary *Hotel Armadillo*, broadcast in April 2017 and narrated by Sir David Attenborough. Much to the delight of our team and viewers, the cameras captured the only documented footage of a newborn wild giant armadillo.

The project has transformed our understanding of the giant armadillo and the important role the species plays within its ecosystem. For example, we now know that their burrows provide vital shelter for over 80 different species.

This research has also contributed to a community outreach programme which has engaged with more than 65,000 people and encourages locals to report sightings of giant armadillos, which are classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.



Our work to re-introduce the Partula snail to Tahiti won a silver BIAZA award.

DISCOVERY AND LEARNING



Through discovery and learning, we aim to foster a deep and lasting connection with the natural world, linking the challenges faced by species in the wild with practical actions which can make a difference.

Outreach

Our Wild about Scotland and Beyond the Panda outreach programmes have now engaged with more than 27,000 pupils and continue to grow from strength to strength.

We were incredibly proud when our Wild about Scotland team, supported by Clydesdale Bank, delivered sessions to their 500th school in 2017. This was a real milestone, with many more schools on our waiting list, eager to engage with RZSS and our eye-catching double decker bus.

Supported by the Edinburgh Confucius Institute, our Beyond the Panda programme also had another successful year. This contributed to RZSS gaining further support from the Confucius Institute at the University of Strathclyde to become the first science specialist hub in the world – a unique opportunity to communicate our conservation message through Chinese language and culture.

Formal and informal education

Over the year we delivered lessons to 21,577 pupils onsite at Edinburgh Zoo and our Highland Wildlife Park, which was a tremendous achievement.

Our Zoo Environment Behavioural Research Award programme (ZEBRA) continued to thrive throughout 2017, as did our summer Conservation Action Team (CAT) Summer School which celebrated its 20th anniversary at Edinburgh Zoo.

The employment of a learning technology officer will allow us to fully explore the potential of incorporating virtual reality, stop motion animation and green screen technology into how we communicate with learners, in line with our commitment to offering innovative conservation education.

We also announced our partnership with Night Zookeeper, which accompanied the launch of a new suite of education sessions more closely aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence, including the creation of Build a Zoo, an enhanced rainforest lesson using virtual reality to immerse learners in the landscape through 360-degree video footage, and our soon to be released Zoga, combining the conservation story of the giant armadillos with yoga poses and mindfulness.

Interpretation

A key highlight at our Highland Wildlife Park was the installation of a life-sized polar bear cubbing den, enabling visitors to experience the same space as Victoria, our resident female who gave birth to her cub just before Christmas.

We were also delighted to launch the Highland Wildlife Warrior Trail – a self-led 'quest' around the park, focusing on native Scottish species and our responsibility to protect these animals.

At Edinburgh Zoo, we worked closely with the communications team to develop the highly successful Paw Patrol trail and to theme our new Wee Beasties enclosure. The year was brought to a close with one of our most ambitious projects by delivering interpretation for the zoo's Giant Lanterns of China Event.

Volunteers

Our volunteers remain vital to our work and mission, with their dedication always hugely appreciated. We were very pleased to support our volunteers in 2017 by starting to refresh their training programme and developing induction opportunities and public engagement resources.

A new volunteer hub at Edinburgh Zoo was ordered towards the end of the year, a welcome Christmas present which opened in spring 2018.

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1. Our Wild about Scotland team delivered sessions to their 500th school in 2017.
2. The Wildlife Warrior Trail at our Highland Wildlife Park.
3. Students at Edinburgh Zoo's Summer School.

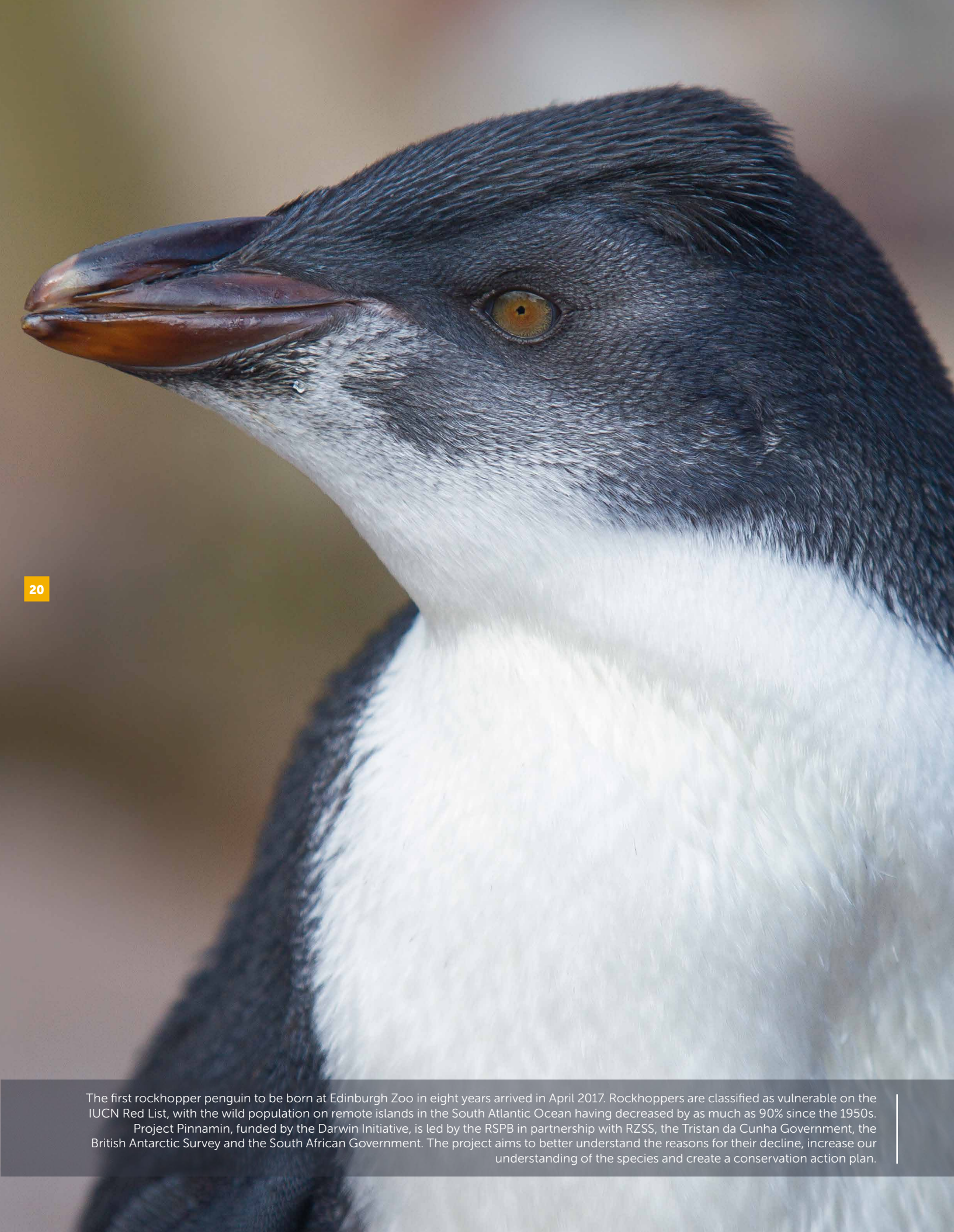


We are very grateful to our volunteers who donated hundreds of hours to our mission of connecting people with nature and safeguarding threatened species.





Two red panda kits were born at our Highland Wildlife Park in the summer of 2017. Red pandas are classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List, with their global population estimated to be lower than 10,000 and in continual decline due to habitat loss, fragmentation and poaching.



The first rockhopper penguin to be born at Edinburgh Zoo in eight years arrived in April 2017. Rockhoppers are classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, with the wild population on remote islands in the South Atlantic Ocean having decreased by as much as 90% since the 1950s.

Project Pinnamin, funded by the Darwin Initiative, is led by the RSPB in partnership with RZSS, the Tristan da Cunha Government, the British Antarctic Survey and the South African Government. The project aims to better understand the reasons for their decline, increase our understanding of the species and create a conservation action plan.



Our animals

Let 2017 be known as the ‘Year of the Bachelor’ at Edinburgh Zoo!

Following the introduction of two male geladas during the previous year, 2017 brought great delight and seven very playful babies. We also paired our male binturong and red pandas with females recommended by the European Endangered Species Programme, who arrived from mainland Europe and settled in immediately.

Our two female Visayan warty pigs were very pleased to receive a male companion from France – and he seemed equally happy having lived in an all-male group for five years! Another bachelor who has found love is a new species for the zoo – a Natal midlands dwarf chameleon, now in residence in Wee Beasties, with two females arriving in spring 2018.

The Wee Beasties population grew further in 2017 with the introduction of our new coral reef tank. Inhabitants, including clownfish and Halloween crabs, have all been sustainably sourced, which is incredibly important as the capture of wild fish and coral is having a devastating impact on the health of reefs and species numbers.

We were very excited to welcome two critically-endangered Baer’s pochard ducklings, with the wild population thought to number fewer than 1,000, having declined sharply in recent years. Our rockhopper penguin chick, the first to be born at the zoo in eight years, was also the focus of attention – not only from his keepers and the public, but also from other rockhoppers who seemed determined to help raise him, whether his parents wanted the support or not!

The loss of our female Sumatran tiger Baginda was very sad. Baginda arrived with us in 2011 and unfortunately

had to be humanely euthanised having developed renal failure and cystic ovarian disease, which was not unexpected given her age.

Despite promising signs, 2017 did not bring a cub for our wonderful giant pandas Tian Tian and Yang Guang. Giant panda breeding is incredibly complex and unpredictable and, as we have done previously, we are reviewing the scientific data and taking into account the latest thinking in enclosure design.

We are also continuing to play a crucial role in safeguarding this magnificent species by helping fund conservation projects in China alongside international partners. While fewer than 2,000 remain in the wild, giant pandas have been reclassified as vulnerable rather than endangered on the IUCN Red List. This is very encouraging and an achievement we and our supporters can be very proud of.

1. Two Baer’s pochard ducklings arrived in 2017.
 2. We were saddened by the loss of our Sumatran tiger, Baginda.
 3. Our Wee Beasties population grew with our new coral tank.



Visitor experience and events

2017 was another busy year for Edinburgh Zoo, which remained in the top four paid-for attractions in Scotland, with more than 560,000 visitors despite experiencing one of the wettest summers on record.

These figures included the largest event the zoo has ever staged in the Giant Lanterns of China, with more than 31,000 people visiting the spectacular show in December and over 82,000 over the three months to February 2018. The event received outstanding feedback, with its scale and smooth-running testament to our staff.

Further events included Zoo Nights as well as our Dreamnight, when we opened our doors to ill and disabled children and their families.

It is very encouraging that visitor satisfaction levels remained high throughout the year. We would like to thank everyone who visited and look forward to a successful 2018.

Estates and gardens

Our investment in visitor and staff facilities, animal accommodation and our stunning gardens continued throughout 2017.

We recognise the challenges of the zoo being on a steep hillside and sourced a land train which we expect to be operational in 2018 to take visitors to the hilltop.

Our in-house property and estates team created a new red panda enclosure, refurbished the former Barbary macaque accommodation for L'hoest monkeys and made enhancements for our lions.

Another significant development was turning our former Discovery Centre into our Wee Beasties exhibit, which is now home to a wide range of exciting species, including reptiles, amphibians and insects, demonstrating their vital role in our natural world.

As part of our Mansion House refurbishment, facilities were upgraded in the charming 200-year-old building, which hosted many weddings, corporate events and functions, with excellent

feedback. It is also impossible to visit the zoo and not be impressed by the beauty of our gardens, with great credit due to our horticultural team.

A highlight and huge task for the team was the installation of over 450 lanterns at Edinburgh Zoo and locations around the capital as part of our Giant Lanterns of China event.

Sustainability

As part of our sustainability programme, and in recognition of Scotland's Climate Week, we hosted a series of events in partnership with Home Energy Scotland and the Energy Savings Trust. These included holding visitor engagement workshops at our Tiger Tracks enclosure to highlight ways our visitors can save money and energy at home.

We were delighted to retain ISO14001:20004 accreditation for Edinburgh Zoo following an external audit.

Edinburgh Zoo also diverted 65 tonnes of waste from landfill in 2017 – the equivalent weight of 4,355 king penguins!

It is very encouraging that visitor satisfaction levels remained high throughout the year. We would like to thank everyone who visited and look forward to a successful 2018.



Giant Lanterns of China – the largest event ever held at Edinburgh Zoo – was a tremendous success, with more than 82,000 visitors between November 2017 and February 2018. Visitors were wowed by more than 450 dazzling lanterns which illuminated the zoo for over 50 nights.

Our animals

Just when we thought 2017 was slowly drawing to a close at our Highland Wildlife Park, the first polar bear to be born in the UK for 25 years arrived – quite an end to the year!

It was the week before Christmas when we first heard cub noises from inside the cubbing den, confirming our female polar bear Victoria had given birth.

An outstanding achievement, the birth is all the more significant given the ever-increasing threat to the wild polar bear population. If 2017 was the 'Year of the Bachelor' at Edinburgh Zoo, 2018 seems destined to be the 'Year of the Polar Bears' at Kincaig, with interest in our new arrival expected to be high.

Another highlight in the Highlands was the birth and rearing of four rare Przewalski's horses. Previously listed as extinct, with the last sighting in the wild in 1968, the species is now classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List.

The fact that the Przewalski's horse is once again roaming the Mongolian Steppe is thanks to co-ordinated conservation breeding programmes – and there is a possibility that our foals may play a part in augmenting wild herds in the future.

We also welcomed the births of Scottish wildcats, lynx, wolves, red pandas, deer from three species, Japanese macaques, bison, markhor and Himalayan tahr.

A female crane was successfully introduced to our male and we are hoping for our first chicks in 2018. Further arrivals included a pair of forest reindeer, from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, to join our resident female.

The complexities of conservation and captive breeding were evident with the sad loss of two male capercaillie. Both females who arrived with us at the same time are doing well and we are hopeful we can breed in 2018 when a new male will be introduced.

Our contribution to breeding programmes elsewhere continued, with nine wildcats leaving for other UK collections, one of our two female wolverines born in 2016 moving to Ahtari Zoo in Finland, two male white-lipped deer going to the Scottish Deer Centre in Fife and a pair of female European bison being taken on by Berlin Tierpark.

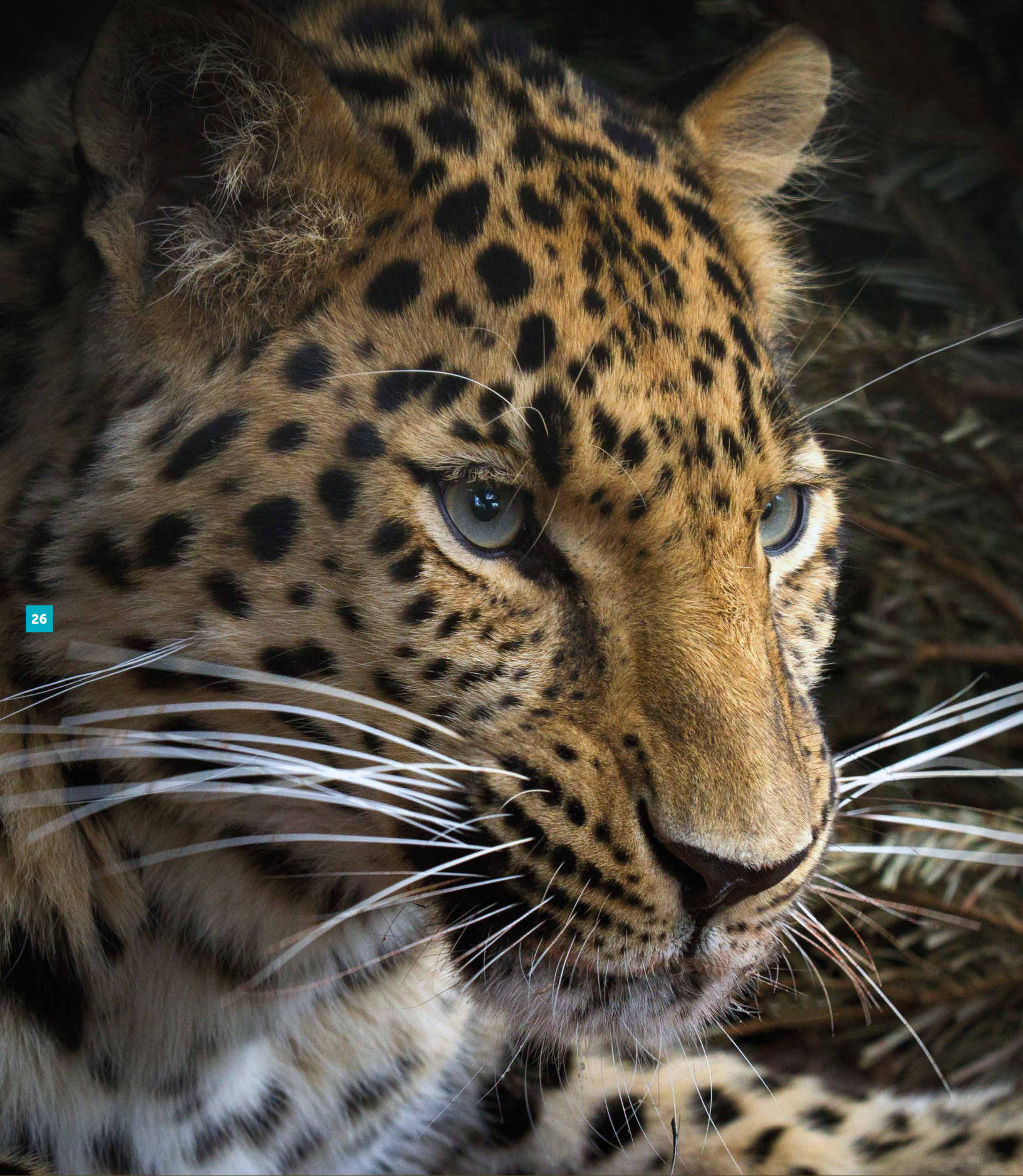
If 2017 was the 'Year of the Bachelor' at Edinburgh Zoo, 2018 seems destined to be the 'Year of the Polar Bears' at Kincaig.



1. One of our lynx.
2. A male Turkmenian markhor.
3. One of our newly-born bison.



Przewalski's horses are now classified as endangered rather than extinct on the IUCN Red List.



A pair of Amur leopards are now resident at our Highland Wildlife Park. Classed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List, with fewer than 70 left in the wild, the Amur leopard is thought to be the rarest cat in the world. The leopards will never be seen by the public as we hope they will breed in a specially designed facility. Their offspring will potentially be some of the first leopards to be released in Russia as part of a project to create a second wild population.

Visitor experience and events

A key highlight for our Highland Wildlife Park in 2017 was being named Best Day Out in Scotland.

This outstanding achievement was recognition and reward for everyone involved with the park, demonstrating the excellent customer service provided by all departments and the way in which our staff are always prepared to go the extra mile to offer our visitors a memorable experience.

Our aim is to connect visitors of all ages with wildlife and our conservation work. The award also reflects the support we receive from our volunteers, members, season pass holders and visitors, regardless of the Highland weather conditions!

We welcomed over 122,000 visitors to our Highland Wildlife Park last year and expect that number to increase in 2018 following the birth of the only polar bear cub in the UK – and the first for 25 years.

Our tour of the main reserve remains as popular as ever, with demand very high in the summer months. We will also be extending dates for our photography tours in 2018.

Estates and gardens

In 2017 we installed our new polar playpark, a fun educational and interactive playground to enjoy while learning about polar bears through play. This has proved to be a great success with young families in particular and we hope to further develop this area.

In anticipation of our breeding programme being successful, we also designed a cubbing den similar to the one our female polar bear Victoria uses so children (and some adventurous adults!) can experience its size by lying down on the polar bear image on the floor.

Our team have also benefited from a new staffroom, with former gate cabins being converted to an office and meeting room, enabling conference calls to reduce travelling time and costs. This further underpins our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and our impact on the environment

Sustainability

Our Highland Wildlife Park and sustainability teams have been working together to gain ISO accreditation. When this is achieved, RZSS in its entirety will be ISO accredited, which will be a real achievement.

Working with Resource Efficient Scotland, we completed a food waste audit at Highland Wildlife Park in November, which will help us identify steps we can take to further encourage visitors to recycle on site.

Another key focus in 2018 will be upgrading Highland Wildlife Park from a Silver to a Gold Green Tourism award.



1. Staff with our Best Visitor Attraction award.
2. Our polar playpark was new for 2017.
3. Life-sized polar bear cubbing den.

COMMUNICATIONS



Public Relations

Communications played a pivotal role throughout 2017 in further developing RZSS's profile as an international leader in conservation and the reputations of Edinburgh Zoo and our Highland Wildlife Park as world class visitor attractions.

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The BBC documentary *Hotel Armadillo* was a fantastic example of how we can continue to engage an ever-increasing audience with our ground-breaking conservation work.

This was followed early in 2018 by *Britain's Polar Bear Cub*, a two-year collaboration between Channel 4 and STV Productions to tell the story of our pioneering polar bear management programme at our Highland Wildlife Park, culminating in the birth of the first cub to be born in the UK for 25 years.

Marketing

Promotion of our Giant Lanterns of China extravaganza – the largest ever event to be held at Edinburgh Zoo – was tremendously successful, with national and international coverage bringing more than 82,000 visitors through our doors.

The BBC documentary *Hotel Armadillo* was a fantastic example of how we can engage an ever-increasing audience with our ground-breaking conservation work.

Our Tiger Tracks enclosure was the main focus of seasonal marketing campaigns for Edinburgh Zoo. Further promotional events included our extremely popular Hatchimal-themed and Paw Patrol trails, as well as our Conservation Action Team activities. At our Highland Wildlife Park, we continued our "Eats Dull Days for Breakfast" campaign.

A further success was our on-going partnership with Lothian Buses, with members of the public voting to select the animal-theme for the number 26

'zoo bus'. Our 'otterly awesome' oriental short-clawed otters were the clear winner in October, with other designs chosen by our marketing team including the spectacular Natal dwarf chameleon to promote our new Wee Beasties exhibit at Edinburgh Zoo.

Digital

Digital channels are central to our marketing and communications activities and campaigns. A fantastic example of our use of viral digital content was our Christmas Day 'rockhopper chick' video, which was viewed around the world, with a reach of more than nine million.

Our in-house digital content also played a key role in the success of our Giant Lanterns of China Event, in particular by showcasing user-generated photos and stories which demonstrated how fun-filled and popular the nights were.

A regular series of online blogs, images and videos covered a broad range of topics across the Society, from animal births and new arrivals, to conservation achievements at home and abroad. Behind the scenes work is also underway to improve the performance and mobile experience for visitors using our websites.

1. Youngsters with our Conservation Action Team bus.
2. Our Hatchimals trail.
3. Our Lothian bus designs are real eye-catchers.



We were delighted to announce the birth of Maya, a female Malayan tapir, at Edinburgh Zoo in 2017. This species is classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List, with the wild population projected to decline by 20% over the next quarter of a century due to habitat loss, hunting and road deaths.



Membership and Adoption

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of our members and adopters – you are all contributing directly to the protection of threatened animals across the world.

With 24,751 members and 1,902 adopters by the end of the year, 2017 was one of our strongest ever, with an average of more than 700 new and renewing members joining us each month.

Our member benefits programme was developed to encourage members to spend more time at our two parks, with new perks including conservation themed events, new reciprocal zoo links, loyalty schemes and even new play areas. We were delighted to see these developments contribute towards 90% of all members who pay for their subscriptions by Direct Debit choosing to renew their membership for another year.

Spring saw the launch of a series of conservation events which engaged with over 2,000 members and adopters throughout the year. From meeting the BBC Two stars of *Hotel Armadillo* at our exclusive “Arnaud and the Armadillos” evening, to wildlife workshops with some of our animal curators and even some behind the scenes tours of our Giant Lanterns of China, our member events were sell-out successes.

We also focused on understanding how we can further improve our communications with members, conducting face to face focus groups, digital question and answer sessions, laying the foundations for a Membership Panel and issuing the 2017 Members Survey. This will help inform our membership programme in 2018 and beyond.

Development

Thank you to all of our funders and corporate sponsors.

Grant fundraising achieved in 2017 is supporting a range of initiatives which include improving accessibility

for visitors to our sites, our ongoing partnership work to reintroduce beavers, invertebrate conservation, our Beyond the Panda outreach programme and eDNA research.

We are very grateful for the continued support from the People’s Postcode Lottery, with a generous grant of £450,000 in 2017 taking the total amount donated to a fantastic £1.4 million.

Key funding partnerships also included support from Clydesdale Bank and Lothian Buses for our Wild about Scotland outreach activities and from Baillie Gifford for our ZEST programme, providing environmental skills training to vocational students.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognise those who left RZSS gifts in their wills during 2017 and thank their families for the assistance in transferring these very special contributions to the Society – which will help us ensure their love for animals endures by protecting threatened species for generations to come.



1. A winter members’ event with our star red panda mascot.
2. Penguins remain one of our most popular adoption packages.
3. We were delighted to welcome the next generation of RZSS members throughout 2017.

Grant giving organisations

ARCUS Foundation
BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums)
British Herpetological Society
Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust
City of Edinburgh Council
Confucius Institute for Scotland
Cruden Foundation Limited
DEFRA IWT Challenge Fund
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
J & JR Wilson Trust
Jean and Roger Miller's Charitable Trust
KMF Maxwell Stuart Charitable Trust
Lord Provost Rapid Action Fund
Margaret Davis Charitable Trust

Nancy Roberts Charitable Trust
People's Postcode Lottery Animal Trust
Robert O'Curle Charitable Trust
Scottish Enterprise
Slater Foundation
The Ancaster Trust
The Castansa Trust
The Japan Foundation
The Leventis Foundation
The Mickel Trust
The Robertson Trust

Corporate sponsors and partners

Allied Mobility & Mobility Solutions
Arnold Clark Automobiles Ltd
Arthur J Gallagher & Co
Baillie Gifford & Co

Clydesdale Bank Plc
Ecotricity (The Renewable Energy Company Limited)
Fife Auto Centre
Fyffes Plc
Gillespie MacAndrew LLP
Hippychick Limited
Lothian Buses Limited
Night Zookeeper, Wonky Star Limited
Panda Babies Media Limited
Team Building with BITE
The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited
Wester Ross Fisheries

THANK YOU

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We would like to thank our President, board of trustees, patrons and honorary fellows for their continued support of RZSS.

President

Ian Marchant

Board

Sandy Batho

Karen Blackport

Mary Bownes

George Brechin (Vice Chair)

Peter Budd

Kerry Falconer

John Fitzgerald

Karen MacEachern

Alan Miller

Tom Mitchell

Andrea Nolan

Jeremy Peat (Chair)

Roger Wheeler

Honorary member

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG, KT

Royal patron

HRH The Princess Royal KG, KT

Civic patrons

The Rt Hon Frank Ross, Lord Lieutenant and Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh

Patrons

Malcolm Bowie

Sir Ewan and Lady Brown

Sir Gerald and Lady Elliot (Sir Gerald, deceased Jan 2018)

John Fitzgerald

Alun Grassick

Jonathan Gray

Alan Morrison

and 7 anonymous

Honorary fellows

Professor Ian Aitken OBE

Dr Jean Balfour CBE, FIC (FOR), JP, DSc, BSc, FIBiol, FRSA, FRSE

Lady Christine Brown

Sir Ewan Brown CBE

Keith Chalmers Watson

Roy Dennis MBE

Sir Gerald Elliot

Henry Elliot BA (Hons)

Lady Margaret Elliot MBE, MA

Dr John Francis ARCS, PhD, DSc, FRSG, FRSE

Thomas Huxley

Alexander Kerr

Dr Andrew Kitchener BSc, PhD

James McCarthy BSc (For)

Jimmie MacGregor MBE

Tessa McGregor MA (posthumously)

Dr Peter Maitland BSc, PhD, FRSE

Prof Aubrey Manning OBE, DPhil RSE

Captain Harald Misund

John Mitchell MA (Hons), Cbiol

Mary Patterson DipEd

John Spence CBE, DL

The Rt Hon the Lord Steel of Aikwood, KT, KBE, DL

Dr Miranda Stevenson OBE

Prof Roger Wheeler OBE, FRSE



The reintroduction of the scimitar-horned oryx to Chad is possibly the world's most ambitious project of its kind. A 'world herd' assembled from captive populations has been created in Abu Dhabi, with the aim of building a self-sustaining population of 500 wild oryx in Chad over the next five years. Our WildGenes team are proud to have played a role from 3,000 miles away, analysing genetic data to inform the herd's management and improve its resilience, building on work previously undertaken some 30 years ago in partnership with Marwell Zoo.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Trustees' statement

The group summary financial statements are not the statutory financial statements but a summary of the information derived from the consolidated statement of financial activities and the consolidated balance sheet. The full Annual Report and consolidated financial statements, which were approved by the trustees on 26 April 2018 and will be submitted to OSCR, received an unqualified audit report from Henderson Loggie.

The auditors have confirmed to the trustees that, in their opinion, the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2017.

For a fuller understanding of the financial affairs of the Society, the statutory financial statements are available on the Society's website (rzss.org.uk).

Signed on behalf of the trustees by:
Jeremy A. Peat, Chairman

Fundraising practice

RZSS is committed to ensuring all fundraising activities are carried out honestly and in compliance with fundraising legislation.

The Development team within RZSS, responsible for all elements of fundraising for the organisation, are also individual members of the Institute of Fundraising and therefore adhere to the Code of Fundraising Practice.

RZSS trustees and staff remain committed to the highest standards in fundraising and to working in full compliance with Scottish charity law and the Scottish system of self-regulated fundraising through the Independent Panel.

Trading performance

Performance in 2017 was impacted by poor summer weather at Edinburgh Zoo. The visitor numbers were 9% down at Edinburgh Zoo and down by 11% at the Highland Wildlife Park, which had a record year in 2016. Higher levels of donations and legacies offset this decline, as well as income from events.

Principal income movements (£m)

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Income 2016 | £14.7 |
| Visitors | -0.8 |
| Other trading | -0.2 |
| Lanterns | +0.5 |
| Donations and legacies | +0.6 |
| Other | -0.2 |
| Income 2017 | £14.6 |

Costs increased in 2017. This was principally due to the lantern festival, as well as increased exchange rate costs in conservation and increased animal welfare costs.

Principal expense movements (£m)

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Expenditure 2016 | £14.3 |
| Lanterns | +0.5 |
| Conservation | +0.2 |
| Living Collections | +0.3 |
| Other | +0.1 |
| Expenditure 2017 | £15.4 |

Overall the Society achieved a net deficit of £0.4m in 2017 (2016 surplus £0.7m). The net movement in funds for the year was £0.4m (2016 £0.1m) after taking account of investment gains and movement in the valuation of the pension fund.

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2017

| | Total 2017 (£) | Total 2016 (£) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income and endowments from: | | |
| Donations and legacies | 1,373,733 | 771,350 |
| Charitable activities | 9,471,030 | 10,417,068 |
| Other trading activities | 3,268,310 | 3,059,824 |
| Investments | 427,635 | 427,605 |
| Other | 42,106 | 27,792 |
| Total income and endowments | 14,582,814 | 14,703,639 |
| Expenditure on: | | |
| Raising funds | 2,689,391 | 2,656,608 |
| Charitable activities | 12,722,616 | 11,666,703 |
| Total expenditure | 15,412,007 | 14,323,311 |
| Gains on investment assets | 386,166 | 358,332 |
| Net income (expenditure) | (443,027) | 738,660 |
| Other recognised gains (losses) | | |
| Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension scheme | 90,000 | (828,000) |
| Other gains/(losses) | - | (4,381) |
| Net movement in funds | (353,027) | (93,721) |
| Reconciliation of funds | | |
| Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2017 | 18,107,149 | 18,200,870 |
| Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2017 | 17,754,122 | 18,107,149 |

Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 December 2017

| | Total 2017 (£) | Total 2016 (£) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Fixed assets | 15,361,040 | 15,903,005 |
| Investments | 3,564,026 | 3,202,335 |
| Current assets | | |
| Stocks | 297,025 | 310,719 |
| Debtors | 995,538 | 905,842 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 1,154,874 | 1,824,046 |
| | 2,447,437 | 3,040,607 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | (2,554,501) | (2,510,287) |
| Net current assets/(liabilities) | (107,064) | 530,320 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | 18,818,002 | 19,635,660 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due after one year | (526,080) | (729,711) |
| Defined benefit pension scheme liability | (537,800) | (798,800) |
| Net assets | 17,754,122 | 18,107,149 |
| Funds | | |
| Unrestricted reserves | | |
| General reserves | 8,140,815 | 8,827,222 |
| Revaluation reserve | 6,150,000 | 6,150,000 |
| Pension reserve | (537,800) | (798,800) |
| Total unrestricted reserves | 13,753,015 | 14,178,422 |
| Restricted funds | 3,552,424 | 3,531,606 |
| Endowment funds | 448,683 | 397,121 |
| | 17,754,122 | 18,107,149 |

Contact us

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Scottish Charity No. SC004064
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